

Commonwealth of Kentucky

Office of the Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Kerri Richardson

502.564.2611

502.330.6633

Jill Midkiff

502.564.2611

502.330.1185

Buddy Rogers

502.607.1611

502.382.6006

Emergency response continues, State and local officials begin damage assessments

FRANKFORT, Ky. (May 6, 2010) - As Kentucky continues its response to the devastating weekend storms and flooding that have affected much of Kentucky, Governor Steve Beshear and his administration remain in close communication with local and federal officials.

"I remain in close contact with federal officials, including conversations with President Barack Obama and other White House officials, as well as Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano," said Gov. Beshear. "They have pledged their assistance, and I will continue to work to ensure Kentuckians get the support they need to recover from this disaster."

Emergency Response Continues

Local and state officials have teamed up with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) personnel to begin assessing damages across the state. FEMA personnel arrived in Frankfort today for briefings, and teams will begin preliminary damage assessments (PDA) throughout the most heavily-damaged counties on Friday.

These PDA teams will include personnel from local emergency management, local elected officials, Kentucky Division of Emergency Management (KyEM), Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC), Kentucky Department of Public Health, Kentucky National Guard (KyNG) and FEMA.

Gov. Beshear applauded the people working to help Kentuckians recover from the storm. "I am especially grateful for the help of our local officials and emergency management workers - I appreciate their quick response and long hours," Gov. Beshear said. "I know our citizens are thankful for their efforts as well."

Rising Lakes

Most rivers in Kentucky have crested, but Lake Barkley and Kentucky Lake will not reach pool until sometime Friday. Emergency personnel continue to watch the basin of the lower Ohio River and lake levels and continue working closely with local, state and federal officials to prepare for flooding as a result of the high waters.

The exact timing of the crest of the Green River at Calhoun in McLean County has yet to be determined and the lower Ohio River is yet to crest. The lower Cumberland River is only being affected by the discharge from Barkley Dam. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is closely monitoring the controlled release and have provided personnel at Smithland in Livingston County downstream of the dam.

USACE also oversees the necessary releases of dams throughout the state. Residents should be aware that these releases are necessary to guard against damaging the dams and to prevent more flooding from rains predicted later this week.

KyEM, the Kentucky Division of Water and United States Army Corps of Engineers, as well as other state and local emergency officials, continue to monitor water levels behind all dams and levees across the Commonwealth.

Residents can get more information about rising waters by visiting the KyEM website at www.kyem.ky.gov or the USACE at www.lrl.usace.army.mil.

Storm By the numbers:

- * 76 counties and 33 cities have declared States of Emergency
- * 4 confirmed fatalities
- * 66 National Guard soldiers are on the ground assisting local officials
- * 39 boil water advisories (BWA) affecting nearly 150,000 Kentuckians
- * 500 well disinfection kits have been prepared for distribution
- * Approximately 30 FEMA personnel in Kentucky by Sunday
- * More than 200 roads still closed
- * Approximately 1,000 KYTC workers are assessing road damages and making repairs.

Safety Messages:

Turn Around, Don't Drown

Do not drive through or wade through any water, no matter if it's just a few inches. Stop, turn around - don't drown. Do not venture onto flooded waterways for recreation. If you must travel by boat, for whatever reason, wear a personal flotation device.

Water Safety Issues

The Kentucky Division of Water reports that, while most drinking water systems are up and running, boil water advisories are in effect for some areas due to broken lines and other factors. Check with your local government or public works officials for current boil water advisory status.

The Division also warns against contact with floodwaters due to contamination from sewage, agricultural products and other harmful substances.

Citizens should be advised that water contaminated in one part of the state travels through fast-flowing rivers and streams to other areas, causing widespread bacterial contamination. If you should come into contact with floodwater, immediately wash the affected areas with hot water and antibacterial soap.

Road Repairs

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet crews across the state are working to repair widespread damage caused by devastating weekend flooding. Road closures and updates can be found at www.511.ky.gov .

For additional information, visit the KyEM website at www.kyem.ky.gov.

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